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PTQ6054

RELEASED IN PART  
B1, 1.4(D)

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ACTION WHA-00

INFO	LOG-00	MFA-00	NP-00	AID-00	CEA-01	CIAE-00	CTME-00
	INL-00	DINT-00	DODE-00	DOFE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00
	EXIM-01	E-00	FAAE-00	VC-00	FRB-00	H-01	TEDE-00
	INR-00	ITC-01	LAB-01	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00
	OES-00	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00
	P-00	SP-00	IRM-00	SSO-00	SS-00	STR-00	TRSE-00
	USIE-00	EPAE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-02	G-00
	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/010W				

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O 132042Z DEC 02  
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9038  
INFO DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC PRIORITY  
DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC PRIORITY  
NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
OPEC COLLECTIVE  
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA  
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ  
AMEMBASSY LIMA  
AMEMBASSY MEXICO  
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN  
AMEMBASSY QUITO  
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO  
USINT HAVANA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CARACAS 004017

DEPT ALSO FOR DS/IP/WHA, S/ES-O/DS, AND DS/DSS/ITA  
NSC FOR LLORENS  
ENERGY FOR D. PHUMPHREY, A. LOCKWOOD, M. BILLIG, AND B.  
MARCOIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/13/2012  
TAGS: EPET, PGOV, ECON, ASEC, VE  
SUBJECT: ENERGY MINISTER EXPORT CLAIMS DISPUTED

REF: A. A. CARACAS 3942  
B. B. CARACAS 3961

CLASSIFIED BY: DCM FREDERICK B. COOK, REASONS 1.5 (B) AND (D)

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SUMMARY  
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1. (C) IN A DECEMBER 11 STATEMENT, IMMEDIATELY DENIED BY THE PDVSA OPPOSITION, MINISTER OF ENERGY AND MINES RAFAEL RAMIREZ ANNOUNCED THAT THE GOV HAS RE-ESTABLISHED CRUDE EXPORTS. THE TRUTH SEEMS TO BE SOMEWHERE BETWEEN THE TWO CLAIMS: TWO OF FIVE VESSELS CITED BY NAME BY MINISTER RAMIREZ SAILED ON DECEMBER 12. MORE THAN 40 VESSELS ARE STILL ANCHORED OFF VENEZUELA'S PETROLEUM PORTS. A MARITIME INDUSTRY CONTACT REPORTED DECEMBER 12 THAT CREWS WERE EXPECTED TO ARRIVE THAT DAY FROM BOMBAY TO CREW STRIKING PDV MARINE VESSELS. THE INDEPENDENT TANKER OPERATORS ASSOCIATION, "INTERTANKO," EXPRESSED ITS CONCERN DECEMBER 12 OVER THE SAFETY OF NAVIGATION AND TERMINAL OPERATIONS AT VENEZUELAN PORTS. A

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MARITIME INDUSTRY SOURCE CONFIRMED THAT THREE SHIPMENTS BOUND FOR CUBA ARE STALLED AND THAT THE GOV WILL IMPORT TWO SHIPMENTS OF GASOLINE FROM THE HOVENSA REFINERY IN ST. CROIX WITHIN THE NEXT FIVE DAYS. END SUMMARY.

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RAMIREZ SAYS EXPORTS ARE MOVING AGAIN: IS IT SO?  
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2. (U) IN A HARD-HITTING DECEMBER 11 ADDRESS, MINISTER OF ENERGY AND MINES RAMIREZ SAID THE GOV IS RE-ESTABLISHING CONTROL OF THE PETROLEUM SECTOR. ACCORDING TO RAMIREZ, REFINERY OPERATIONS ARE RESUMING; NEW MANAGEMENT IN THE PRODUCTION AREAS IS NORMALIZING PRODUCTION OPERATIONS; AND, FINALLY, EXPORTS HAVE BEGUN.

3. (C) RAMIREZ CLAIMED THAT VENEZUELA PLANNED TO SHIP A TOTAL OF 1.4 MILLION BARRELS ON DECEMBER 11. HE NAMED FIVE VESSELS THAT WOULD SAIL OUT OF VENEZUELA'S PETROLEUM PORTS ON FIVE DIFFERENT VESSELS (NONE PDV MARINE). THE FIVE WERE REPORTED TO BE: THE &MARSHALL ZHUKOV8 WITH 350,000 BARRELS BOUND FOR CURACAO; THE &ESPIRIT8 WITH 450,000 BARRELS FOR THE BAHAMAS; THE &JOSEFA CAMEJO8 LOADING 550,000 BARRELS FOR THE U.S. AT PUERTO LA CRUZ; THE &OLIMPIAS LOADING 350,000 BARRELS BOUND FOR THE U.S. OUT OF PUERTO LA CRUZ; AND, FINALLY, AN EXXONMOBIL VESSEL WHICH WOULD LOAD 525,000 BARRELS ALSO BOUND FOR THE U.S. THE OPPOSITION IMMEDIATELY RESPONDED THAT THIS WAS NONSENSE AND THAT BESIDES, A RUSSIAN BOAT (ECONOFF BELIEVES THEY MEANT THE &MARSHALL ZHUKOV8) HAD HAD AN ACCIDENT COMING INTO THE DOCK AT LA SALINA (IN

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LAKE MARACAIBO) AND ALMOST CRASHED INTO THE PIER.

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4. (C) ON DECEMBER 12, ECONOFF CONTACTED A SHIPPING AGENT WHO SAID NO SHIPS HAD SAILED ON DECEMBER 11. HE CONFIRMED, HOWEVER, THAT THE &MARSHALL ZHUKOV8 SAILED OUT OF LA SALINA AT 7:00 AM ON DECEMBER 12. DESPITE THE FACT THAT HE DEBUNKED THE STORY THAT IT HAD HAD AN ACCIDENT AT THE PIER, OTHER INDUSTRY CONTACTS CLAIM THAT THE TANKER VIOLATED NUMEROUS INTERNATIONAL SAFETY CODES SUCH AS THE REQUIREMENT TO DOCK WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF TUGBOATS. THE &ESPIRIT8 (ACTUALLY THE "KIOWA SPIRIT") IS NEXT IN LINE TO BE DOCKED AT LA SALINA BUT IS STILL AWAITING A SAFETY LETTER OF GUARANTEE FROM PDVSA TO U.S. FIRM LYONDELL. OF THE OTHER VESSELS NAMED BY RAMIREZ, THE "JOSEFA CAMEJO" IS BERTHED AND BEING LOADED IN PUERTO LA CRUZ AND IS BELIEVED TO HAVE SAILED THE NIGHT OF DECEMBER 12. THE SHIPPING AGENT ALSO INFORMED ECONOFF THAT THE VESSEL &OLIMPIA8 IS CONTRACTED TO CONOCOPHILLIPS AND THE GOV IS PUTTING SERIOUS PRESSURE ON THE COMPANY TO FORCE THEM TO LOAD. FINALLY, WITH RESPECT TO VESSEL NUMBER FIVE, EXXONMOBIL DE VENEZUELA PRESIDENT MARK WARD INFORMED ECONOFF THAT THE MINISTER'S REPORT THAT EXXONMOBIL WOULD LOAD A VESSEL WAS UNTRUE. WARD ADDED THAT EXXONMOBIL WOULD REFUSE TO LOAD UNTIL THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF BERTHING AND LOADING CAN BE ASSURED.

5. (C)

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ACTION WHA-00

INFO	LOG-00	MFA-00	NP-00	AID-00	CEA-01	CIAE-00	CTME-00
	INL-00	DINT-00	DODE-00	DOTE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00
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	USIE-00	EPAE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-02	G-00
	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/010W				

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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9039  
INFO DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC PRIORITY

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DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC PRIORITY  
NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
OPEC COLLECTIVE  
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
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DEPT ALSO FOR DS/IP/WHA, S/ES-O/DS, AND DS/DSS/ITA  
NSC FOR LLORENS  
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/13/2012  
TAGS: EPET, PGOV, ECON, ASEC, VE  
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[REDACTED] REPORTED THAT ON DECEMBER 12, 26 VESSELS IN TOTAL  
WERE ANCHORED OFF THE VARIOUS COMPONENTS OF THE JOSE TERMINAL  
COMPLEX AND PUERTO LA CRUZ. THERE WERE SIX IN LAKE  
MARACAIBO; 5 OFF THE CARDON PORTION OF THE PARAGUANA COMPLEX;  
14 OFF OF THE AMUAY PART OF THE PARAGUANA COMPLEX; AND ONE  
OFF PUERTO CABELLO. [REDACTED] ALSO CALLED ECONOFF'S ATTENTION  
TO A STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE INDEPENDENT TANKER OPERATORS  
ASSOCIATION (INTERTANKO), EXPRESSING DEEP CONCERN OVER SAFETY  
OF NAVIGATION AND TERMINAL OPERATIONS IN VENEZUELA'S PORTS.  
ACCORDING TO THE STATEMENT WHICH CAN BE FOUND ON INTERTANKO'S  
WEBSITE (WWW.INTERTANKO.COM), "THERE IS A RISK THAT  
VENEZUELAN PORTS COULD BE CONSIDERED "UNSAFE" DUE TO THE LACK  
OF PROPERLY QUALIFIED PERSONNEL TO CARRY OUT SUPPORT  
ACTIVITIES." THE ASSOCIATION ENCOURAGES ITS MEMBERS TO  
EXERCISE "EXTREME CAUTION ... BEFORE ENTERING TERMINALS IN  
THE AREA."

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HARDBALL FOR PDV MARINE...  
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5. (C) ON DECEMBER 11, THE VENEZUELAN MILITARY BOARDED AND SEIZED TWO OF THE 14 STRIKING PDV TANKERS. THEIR CAPTAINS WERE JAILED. INDUSTRY SOURCES CLAIM THE NEW CAPTAINS INSTALLED ON BOTH VESSELS HAVE DUBIOUS QUALIFICATIONS AND IT IS DOUBTFUL WHETHER THE CREWS WILL OBEY. THE "YAVIRE" IS STILL ANCHORED OFF THE JOSE CRYOGENIC TERMINAL AND THE "PILIN LEON" IS ALSO STILL ANCHORED NEAR MARACAIBO. THE SHIPPING AGENT INFORMED ECONOFF THAT 3 CREWS (25 SEAMEN) WERE EXPECTED TO ARRIVE DECEMBER 12 FROM BOMBAY TO CREW THE STRIKING PDV MARINE VESSELS. INTERESTINGLY, AN EMBASSY DRIVER WAS AT CARACAS'S INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT ON DECEMBER 12 AND SAW APPROXIMATELY 60 PASSENGERS FROM INDIA, WHO ARRIVED ON AN INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT AND WERE IMMEDIATELY HERDED ONTO TWO BUSES WITHOUT PASSING THROUGH IMMIGRATION OR CUSTOMS CONTROLS.

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BUT KEYSTONE KOPS ELSEWHERE  
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6. (C) THERE CONTINUE TO BE REPORTS OF INCIDENTS THAT WOULD SMACK OF THE KEYSTONE KOPS IF THE POTENTIAL RISKS TO FACILITY SECURITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE WERE NOT SO HIGH. TWO SMALL BOATS CARRYING PERFORATION RESIDUE ARE REPORTED TO HAVE SUNK IN LAKE MARACAIBO BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF PROFESSIONAL OPERATION. THERE ARE REPORTS OF AT LEAST ONE TANKER TRUCK ACCIDENT. THERE ARE ALSO REPORTS OF CELEBRATORY FIRECRACKERS BEING LIT IN SECURE REFINING AREAS AND OF REPLACEMENT PERSONNEL SMOKING WHILE PERFORMING FUNCTIONS SUCH AS LOADING GASOLINE TANKERS. SOME OF THIS MAY BE OPPOSITION DISINFORMATION BUT THE SHEAR VOLUME OF SUCH REPORTS LEADS  
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SOME CREDENCE TO THEM.

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CUBA SUPPLIED FROM COLOMBIA/VENEZUELA FROM ST. CROIX  
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7. (C)

CONFIRMED TO ECONOFF DECEMBER 12 THAT THREE SHIPMENTS FOR CUBA HAVE BEEN HELD UP BY THE STRIKE. HE ADDED THAT A VESSEL IS NOW LOADING 600,000 BARRELS OF 30 DEGREE API "CUSIANA" CRUDE FROM COLOMBIA FOR CUBA. FINALLY, HE NOTED THAT TWO SHIPMENTS OF GASOLINE ARE EXPECTED IN VENEZUELA FROM THE HOVENSA REFINERY IN ST. CROIX WITHIN THE NEXT FIVE DAYS.

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COMMENT

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